

**Testimony before the Appropriations Committee  
on H.B. No. 5037: AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET  
FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023  
February 22, 2022**

Hello, my name is Jaidyn Gillette and I am from Putnam, CT. I am a senior at Albertus Magnus College, majoring in criminal justice with a minor in management. I am the second person in my family to attend college, following the footsteps of my mom who also went to college and knows the expense of college tuition. After attending Albertus Magnus College for the past four years, the Roberta Willis Scholarship has been very beneficial to not just myself, but my academics.

This scholarship has helped in so many ways. I come from a modest-income family and work three jobs to help pay for college. If it wasn't for the Roberta Willis Scholarship, I would have had to take out quite a few loans to help cover my college expenses. The Roberta Willis Scholarship has increased my ability to stay in school and graduate on time. This scholarship has provided an opportunity for me to earn my degree without having any financial struggles. As a recipient, I have more time to focus on studying and learning, which leads me to have better grades and retention of knowledge. If it wasn't for this scholarship, I would have been financially stressed and would not have been able to focus on my degree. Albertus Magnus has instilled in me a greater sense of belonging and motivation.

Being able to attend Albertus has given me the opportunity to continue my athletic career but also become close with my professors who have pushed me to be my best. Being a criminal justice major, I have been able to work with my professors who have worked in law enforcement, teaching me what I need to know for my future career. After graduation, I plan on going to the Police Academy to become a police officer, following the footsteps of my parents who have also worked in law enforcement. After completing the Police Academy, I plan on returning to school to complete my Master's Degree.

Please increase funding for need-based funding in the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program to ensure that students like myself have the opportunity to enroll in the Connecticut institution that is the best fit for them.